791 The pi-mu is a unique figure in Lolo society and quite
793 different from ordinary people in his responsibility. He spe-
756 cializes in religious and magic activities. There is at least one pi-mu in each village, either a black or a white Lolo, but at present most pi-mu are white Lolo. Only a male can become a pi-mu. He goes through a tutorial system, the only kind of formal instruction among the Lolo which requires learning and training. Tutorial instruction is usually handed down from father to son or from uncle to nephew as a family occupation. The pi-mu keeps in the family scriptural books, [779] including those on ancestral legends, fortune-telling, divination, invocation, exorcism, praying for rain, and others, all transmitted and copied in Lolo. [95] The Lolo written lan- [212] guage is not commonly used, and its preservation and transmission are to be credited mainly to the pi-mu.

791 Besides the pi-mu, there is another kind of magician
756 called su-nieh. The su-nieh has no tutor. He is just an ordi-
[787] nary person possessed by a su-nieh ghost that causes sickness or loss of mind, but later, after having sacrificed to it a white sheep and a white chicken in the woods and having recovered from sickness, he becomes a su-nieh. Both men and women can become su-nieh, but the art is not transmittible and also scriptures do not exist. Ordinarily, when a su-nieh performs [755] magic to cure sickness, he beats a sheepskin drum, whirls and dances — his whole body shivering and his mouth muttering chants — moves around and imprecates to the utmost of his ability.

Although the pi-mu and the su-nieh belong to different systems, they have the common aim of practicing magic. The duty of a pi-mu is very complicated, while that of a su-nieh is comparatively simple. We shall describe separately their work and performances to make clear the position of magic among the Lolo.

787 First, let us discuss divination, a form of divine rev-
elation that foretells good or bad fortune. There are two opposite kinds of divination. The first kind is prediction made by the god through human mouth, or the communication of divine will by the priest in forecasting future developments — a type of divination practiced universally in Siberia, Africa, and Polynesia. The other kind is practiced through the observation of physical objects or of animal entrails, bones, skeletons, and other things. In order to foretell the future, the magician has to have strict technical training to enable him to observe the important positions and spots of animal bones and entrails. It is to this kind that the entire system of Lolo divination belongs.

5: Pollard M-5 (no date) 1921 AE4 Lolo AE4

had talked this matter over with the wizard pundit and other 173
Nosu friends a Tibetan Christian came to my home with a missionary who has spent years on the borders of Tibet. I got one of the independent Nosu from north of the Yangtse and this Tibetan together, and tried hard to see if there was anything in common in their speech. We had no success whatever in the attempt. Neither could understand anything the other said, and at last the two gave up the attempt and agreed that they had nothing in common. This Tibetan came from the neighbourhood of Lhassa. With Tibetans who live in Eastern Tibet, where these last years there has been such a struggle with China, a fellow-missionary who is an authority on that borderland and its peoples assured me the case is very different. He told me that there was a good bit of similarity between the speech of these Tibetans and the Nosu. It seems probable that the claim made by the Nosu is correct. If so, in these Nosu one is in touch with one of the very early races of Asia. There is, however, one problem in connection with this question which is not easily solved. Buddhism is all-powerful throughout [179] •
Tibet. In Nosuland I found no trace of it at all. There are no temples, no priests, no idols, and polyandry, that eccentric custom of the great Lama tablelands, is unknown among the brave hill tribes. There are customs almost as revolting, such, for instance, as a father claiming his widowed daughter-in-law, but one woman having several husbands is quite unknown.

Then again the Tibetan written language and literature are very different to that of the Nosu. This, however, may not be a certain proof of the dissimilarity of origin in the two peoples, for the Tibetian written language was not originally their own.